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SUBJECT: PRIVATE OIL FIELD SECURITY TIED TO NISS, SAYS AL-JAZ AT SPECIAL AEC SESSION

REF: KHARTOUM 1138

¶11. (SBU) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: A July 28 Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) special session on the oil sector revealed new information on the sensitive subject of oil field security. The session featured a presentation by and dialogue with the Minister of Energy and Mining, Mr. Awad Al-Jaz. The Minister deflected questions about further redeployments of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) from oil fields, contending that a threat to the oil fields exists - one contained by private security companies' close collaboration with the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). Representatives from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) expressed concern about delays in redeployment from oil fields and asserted that private security forces with ties to NISS are essentially a militia controlled by the government. These concerns follow only one week after an AEC plenary which raised similar concerns about delays in SAF redeployment (reftel) from southern oil fields. Al-Jaz's frank admission of NISS's connection to private oil security forces raises more questions and adds another layer of complexity to an already contentious issue. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

¶12. This July 28 meeting was the first time that Al-Jaz appeared at an AEC meeting, having turned down many previous offers to present. Although oil field security was one of the main themes of the meeting, Al Jaz further discussed community development initiatives in oil blocks, the environmental impact of the industry, and recent developments in the National Petroleum Commission. The draft minutes and copy of Al-Jaz's automated PowerPoint slideshow with recorded voice annotation will be sent to the Sudan Programs Group.

¶13. (U) After Al-Jaz's presentation, SPLM representatives quickly inquired about a number of issues including the remaining presence of some 3,600 SAF troops in southern oil fields. They also inquired about the existence of a special division of the police assigned to oil fields in the south. With respect to both of these issues, the SPLM representatives asked, "Is there really a threat to the oil fields in the south?"

"THERE IS A THREAT TO THE OIL FIELDS"

¶14. (U) Responding to this question, Mr. Jaz quickly replied that a threat to oil fields does exist. He stated that the threat is not from armies, but from disgruntled individuals who have very high expectations. He acknowledged rumors about an oil security force often referred to as "Awad Al-Jaz's Police," but denied the existence of any such force. He then stated that many people have confused the private security forces of oil companies as a new government entity. (NOTE: In AEC Wealth-Sharing Working Group meetings on oil and the environment held in April and May, NCP representatives acknowledged the creation of a new "petroleum police force" of 800 police attached to the Ministry of Energy and Mines and currently deployed within the oil field areas. Al-Jaz's remarks

conflict with these earlier statements. END NOTE.)

PRIVATE SECURITY FORCES HAVE TIES TO NISS

¶5. (U) After learning of the existence of these private security forces, international members of the AEC further inquired how these private companies hire individuals for their security forces. CDA Fernandez asked whether these private companies hire local people, or whether applicants come from a specifically designated pool approved by the government. The Minister of Energy and Mining, Mr. Jaz, responded that the companies must "refer back" to the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) for their security personnel and clarified that while companies have their own criteria for hiring, the companies must select their employees from individuals designated by NISS. Mr. Jaz did not elaborate about the actual screening, training, or ongoing support that these individuals receive from NISS.

PRIVATE MILITIAS?

¶6. (U) SPLM representatives voiced concern about companies employing people from NISS "who may be better armed than the army itself." They called this a serious matter and said that these private security personnel may be considered a militia. Mr. Jaz rejected claims that the private security forces are a militia or better trained and equipped than the army. He stated that these forces do not have tanks or heavy weaponry.

¶7. (U) Throughout most of the presentation, Albino Akol Akol, the Minister of Industry and Mining of the Government of Southern Sudan, defended the National Petroleum Commission that he was officially representing at this meeting. However, on the point of these private forces, Akol stated that "that some security companies are

taking the law into their own hands," and added that the joint integrated forces need to take the lead.

¶8. (U) The SPLM representatives also inquired why there is not more money available for development and salaries in the south, when the volume of oil production is up and the price of oil has risen. They then stated that the Ministry of Defense and the NISS are the only two ministries that do not seem to complain about a shortage of funding. They added that the CPA is very clear about control of the oil fields, and that protecting oil areas is the responsibility of only the SAF, SPLA, and JIU troops, and not private security forces.

¶9. (U) After the meeting, one of the SPLM participants noted to PolOff that redeployment from the oil fields is one of the most specific, tangible, and measurable actions mandated by the CPA. This contact further questioned, "If agreement on oil field security cannot be reached, how can we work together on the more complex issues of the CPA?"

BIO NOTE

¶10. (U) Mr. Jaz has been the Minister of Energy and Mining since 1996. He is from Merowe in North Sudan, and graduated from the University of Khartoum. He was appointed the Minister of Internal Trade in 1990 and later a Cabinet Affairs Minister on the Council of Ministers in 1994. He was one of the early proponents of the NIF and rarely meets with U.S. officials.